BEGINNER-FRIENDLY HANDBOOK

How to Use a LAN Messenger

Chat, share files and get help from your colleagues — without the internet, and without your data ever leaving the office.

This guide is written for people who have never used a LAN messenger before. Every task is broken into small numbered steps, and each one comes with a picture of what you should see on your screen.

- ✓ Install the app in about two minutes
- ✓ Send your first message
- ✓ Start a group chat or notify the whole office at once
- ✓ Send files and folders by dragging them
- ✓ Find an old message, set your status, ask for remote help

GET LAN MESSENGER →

Download and full documentation: messenger.softros.com

Examples and screens in this guide follow Softros LAN Messenger for Windows. Other LAN messengers work in a very similar way.

What is inside this guide

You do not have to read this from start to finish. Jump straight to the thing you need to do.

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A one-page explanation with no technical words

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How to read the pictures

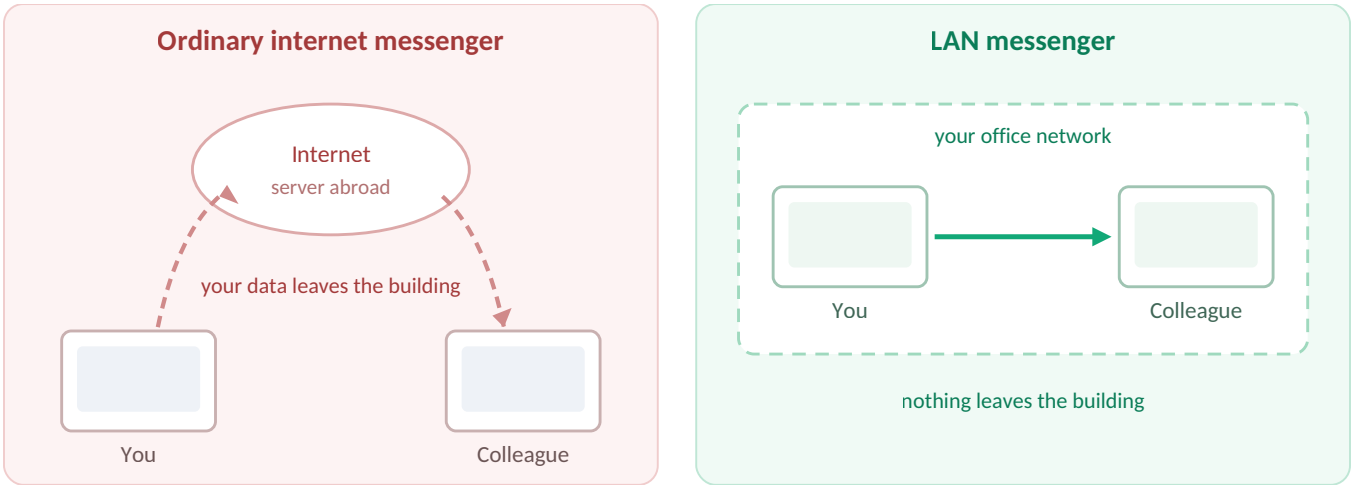
The illustrations in this guide are simplified drawings of the real windows. They show the same buttons in the same places, with the important part highlighted in blue so you can spot it instantly on your own screen.

1 What a LAN messenger is

If you already know, skip to page 4. If not, this takes one minute.

You probably use WhatsApp, Telegram or Viber to talk to friends. Those apps send every message out to the internet, to a company server somewhere in the world, and then back down to your colleague — even if that colleague is sitting three metres away from you.

A **LAN messenger** takes a shortcut. LAN simply means "the network inside your building". Your message goes straight from your computer to your colleague's computer across the office network and stops there. It never touches the internet.



The whole idea in one picture: a shorter, private route for your messages.

Why offices choose this

It stays private	Messages and files never leave your network, so client data and trade secrets cannot leak out through a chat app.
It works without internet	If the office internet goes down, you can still reach everyone in the building.
Nothing to set up	No server, no accounts, no passwords. The app finds your colleagues automatically.
It is fast	Files go computer-to-computer at network speed instead of being uploaded and downloaded again.
Everything is logged	Conversations are saved locally, so you can look up what was agreed last month.

Good to know

Because a LAN messenger only reaches computers on your own network, you cannot use it to message someone at home or in another city — unless your IT team has connected the two offices. That limitation is exactly what makes it secure.

2 Before you start

Thirty seconds of checking now saves a confusing half hour later.

1. **You are on the office network.** Plugged into the office cable, or connected to the office Wi-Fi. A guest Wi-Fi network usually will not work — it is deliberately kept separate.
2. **Your colleagues will install it too.** A LAN messenger only shows people who are running the same app. If you are the first person to install it, your list will look empty, and that is normal.
3. **You can install software on your computer.** On a work computer this sometimes requires the IT department. If Windows asks for an administrator password that you do not have, stop and ask IT — do not guess.

> **If your company already uses one**
>
> Ask your IT team for the installer they distribute, rather than downloading it yourself. Company installers often arrive pre-configured with your office groups and licence, so everything works the moment it opens.

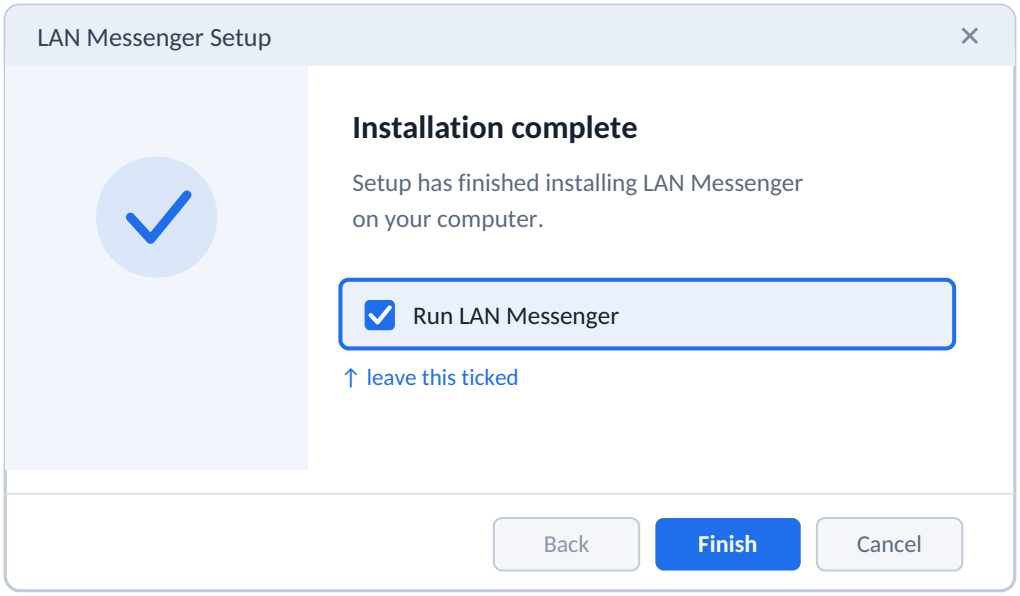
What you will end up with

A small window in the corner of your screen listing everyone in the office. Click a name, type, press Enter. That is genuinely the whole thing — the rest of this guide is about the extras.

3 Installing the app

Roughly two minutes, and you will not be asked anything complicated.

1. **Download the installer.** Go to messenger.softros.com/downloads and download the Windows version. Save it somewhere you can find it, such as your Downloads folder.
2. **Double-click the downloaded file.** Windows may show a blue "Do you want to allow this app to make changes?" box — click **Yes**. This is normal for any installer.
3. **Accept the licence agreement** and click **Next**.
4. **Leave the installation folder as it is** and click **Next**, then **Install**. There is no reason to change the default location.
5. **On the last screen, tick "Run LAN Messenger" and click Finish.** This is the only checkbox that matters — it starts the app straight away.



Step 5 — the final installer screen. Tick the box, click Finish.

Where did the window go?

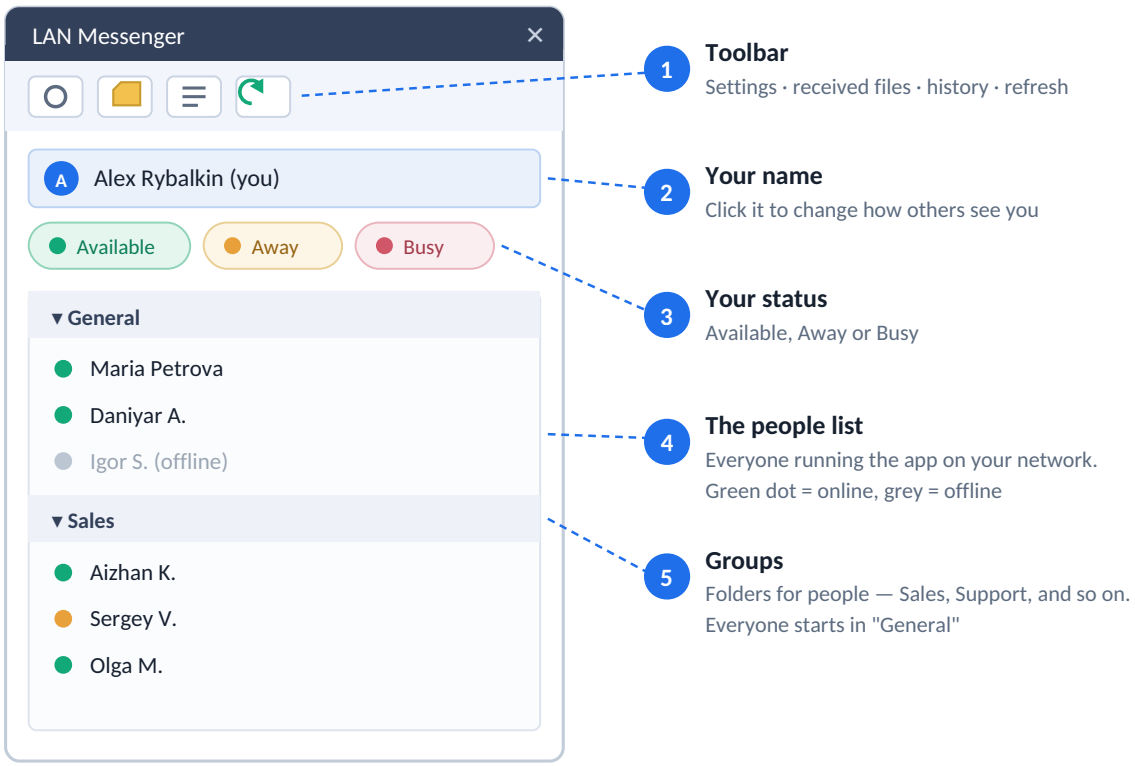
After you click Finish, the app usually appears small and tucked into a corner of the screen, or hidden next to the clock in the bottom-right of your taskbar. It has not failed — it simply starts out of the way. Click its icon near the clock to bring it back.

Do you need to create an account?

No. There is no sign-up, no email, no password. The app uses your Windows user name automatically, and you can change that display name later in two clicks (see section 4).

4 A tour of the main window

Five areas. Once you know them, everything else is obvious.



The main window, with the five areas you need to recognise.

Changing your display name

By default other people see your Windows account name, which is sometimes something like `ivanov_i2`. To fix that, click your name at the top of the window (area 2), type a friendly version such as "Ivan Ivanov — Accounting", and click OK.

Closing versus quitting

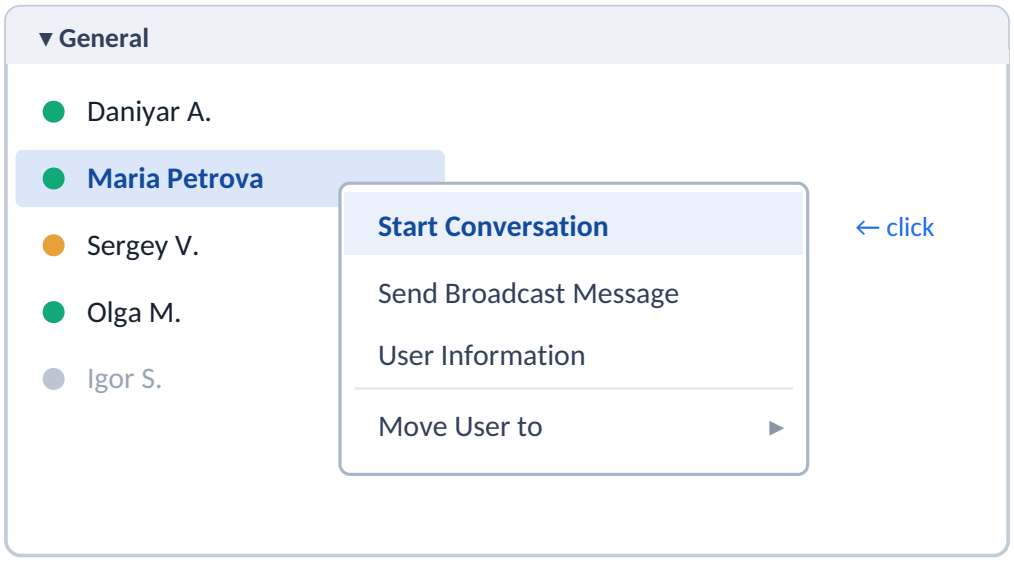
Clicking the ✕ in the corner does **not** shut the app down. It hides it next to the clock so you keep receiving messages and files. To bring it back, click that small icon, or right-click it and choose **Restore**.

> **Nobody in your list?**
>
> Click the refresh button on the toolbar first. If it is still empty, your colleagues have probably not installed the app yet — see section 14.

5 Sending your first message

This is the part you will use a hundred times a day.

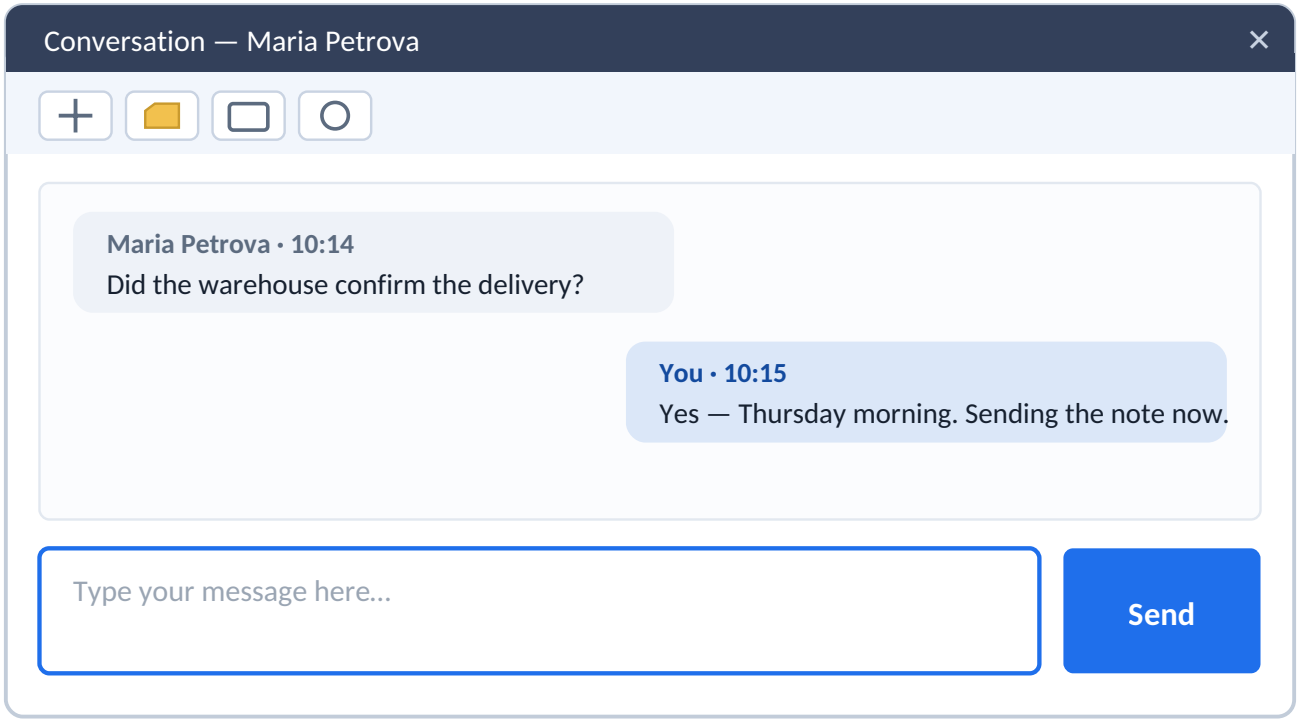
1. **Open the main window.** Click the app's icon next to the clock in your taskbar.
2. **Pick the person.** Any of these three ways works — use whichever feels natural:
   - Click their name in the list.
   - Right-click their name and choose **Start Conversation**.
   - Just start typing their name on the keyboard, then press `Enter` when their name is highlighted.
3. **Type your message** in the box at the bottom of the conversation window that opens.
4. **Press `Enter` to send**, or click the Send button.



Right-clicking a name gives you every option for that person at once.

The conversation window

What you sent and received appears in the upper half. The box at the bottom is where you type. When you reopen a chat with someone, the app shows the last messages you exchanged, so you always have the thread in front of you.


Conversation — Maria Petrova
Maria Petrova · 10:14
Did the warehouse confirm the delivery?
You · 10:15
Yes — Thursday morning. Sending the note now.
Type your message here…
Send

The conversation window: history on top, your typing box at the bottom.

Writing more than one line

Pressing `Enter` sends the message. To start a new line inside the same message instead, press `Ctrl` + `Enter`. If you would rather have it the other way round, you can swap the two in Settings → Hot Keys.

Messaging someone who is offline

You can still write to a colleague whose dot is grey. The message waits and is delivered the moment they sign in. Files are the exception — those need the other person to be online.

6 Group conversations

When two people is not enough and everyone needs to see the replies.

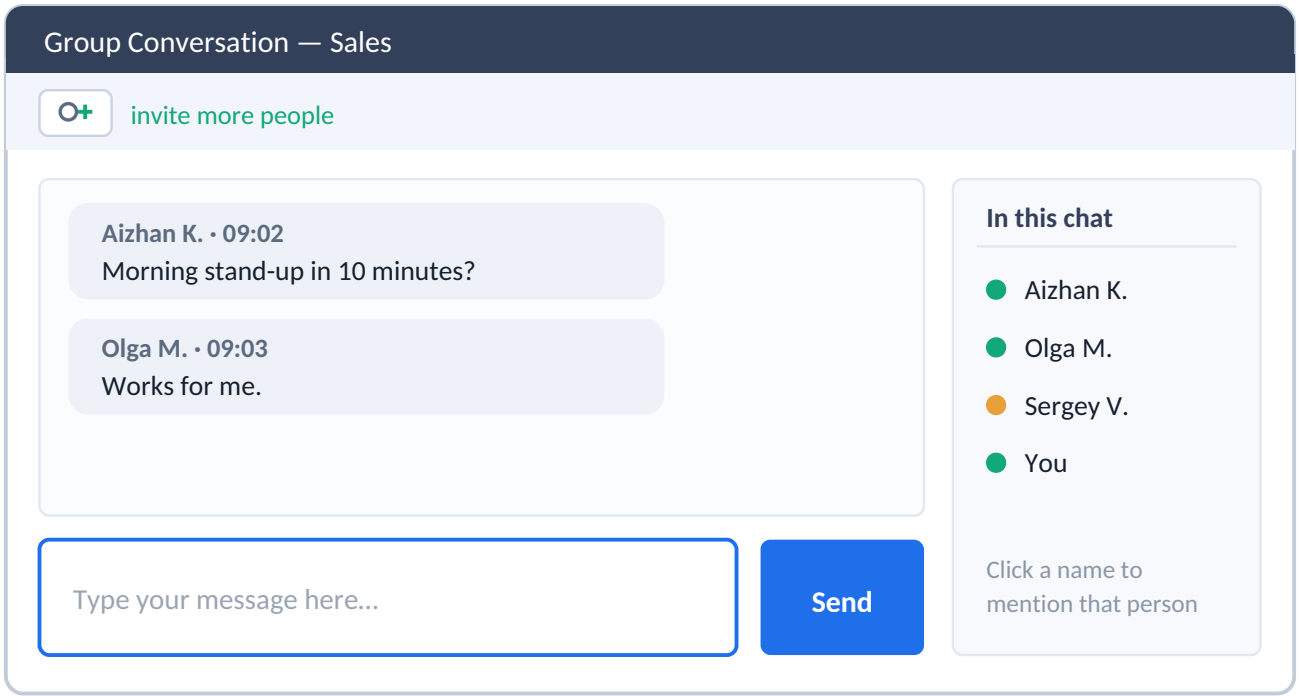
A group conversation is one shared window. Everybody invited sees every message, exactly like a group chat in any other app — the difference is that it exists only inside your office network.

Way 1 — turn an existing chat into a group chat

1. Open a normal conversation with one person.
2. On that window's toolbar, click the button for **inviting users** (the icon with a plus next to a person).
3. Tick the colleagues you want to add, then confirm.

Way 2 — start with a whole team at once

1. In the main window, find the group heading you want, for example **Sales**.
2. **Right-click the group name.**
3. Choose **Start Group Conversation**.



A group conversation. The panel on the right shows who is taking part.

Addressing one person inside a group

Click a name in the participants panel on the right and it is inserted into your message box — a quick way to make clear who you are answering.

Leaving a group conversation

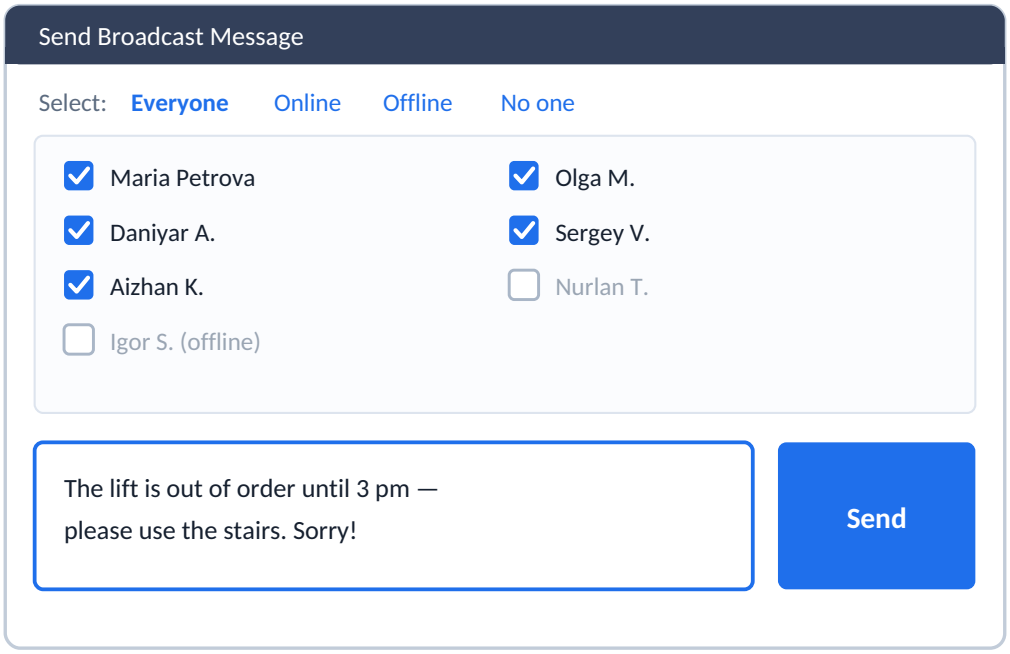
Click the ✕ on the group conversation window and confirm with **Yes**. You leave that conversation; the others carry on without you.

> **Group chat or broadcast?**
>
> Use a **group conversation** when you expect a discussion. Use a **broadcast** (next section) when you only need to announce something and do not want twenty replies.

7 Broadcast messages

"The lift is out of order" — sent to fifty people in five seconds.

1. **Open the main window.**
2. **Open the broadcast window** in either of these ways:
   - Right-click a **group name** and choose **Send Message to Group**.
   - Right-click **any person** and choose **Send Broadcast Message**.
3. **Check the recipient list.** Tick anyone missing. The **Select** link above the list gives you shortcuts: **Everyone**, **Online** only, **Offline** only, or **No one** to clear the list and start again.
4. **Type your announcement** and click **Send** (or press `Enter`).



Tick who should receive it, type once, send once.

Use this sparingly

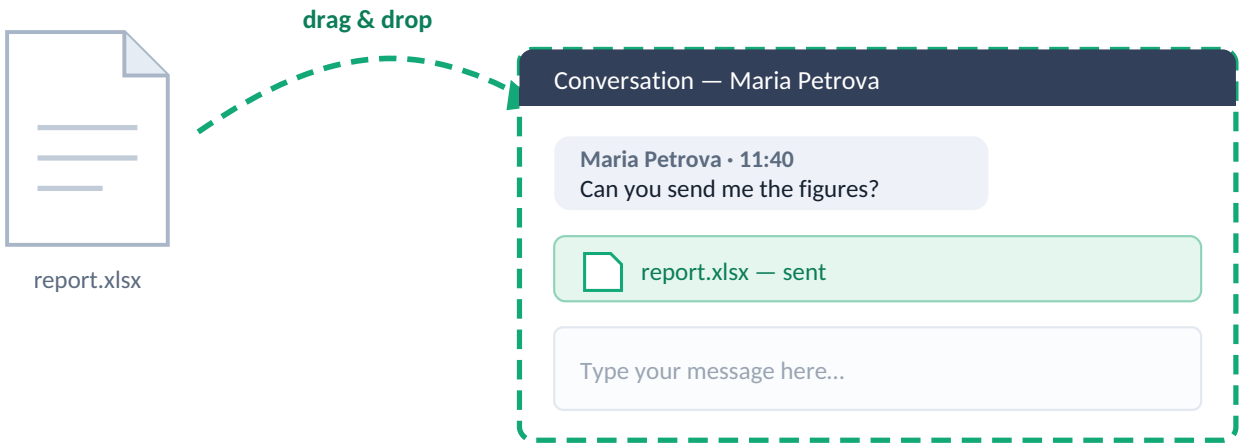
A broadcast interrupts everyone at once. Keep it for things that genuinely affect the whole office — outages, deliveries, fire drills, early closing. For anything narrower, message a group instead.

8 Sending files and folders

No uploading, no attaching, no size limit imposed by an email server.

1. **Make sure the person is online** — a green dot next to their name. File transfer does not work with offline colleagues.
2. **Open a conversation** with them (see section 5).
3. **Drag the file or folder from your desktop or Explorer window and drop it onto the conversation window.** The transfer starts on its own.

There is a shortcut too: you can drag a file directly onto a person's **name** in the main window, without opening a chat first.



Drop the file anywhere on the conversation window — the whole window is the target.

Receiving files

Incoming files are normally downloaded automatically. When the transfer finishes, a link appears in the conversation window that opens the folder where the file was saved.

You can also reach that folder at any time from the **Browse Received Files** button on the main window's toolbar. If you would prefer files to be saved somewhere specific — your Desktop, say, or a project folder — change it in **Settings → File Transfer**.

Sending the same file to several people

Open the broadcast window as described in section 7, tick your recipients, and attach the file there. Everyone gets the same copy without you repeating yourself six times.

Two things to watch

Very large folders take a while, and the transfer stops if either computer goes to sleep or leaves the network. And because these files land directly on colleagues' computers, double-check the recipient list before sending anything confidential.

9 Organising people into groups

Worth five minutes if your office has more than about fifteen people.

When you first open the app, everyone sits in a single group called **General**. That is fine for a small team. Once the list gets long, splitting people into Sales, Support, Warehouse and so on makes them much easier to find — and lets you message a whole department in one action.

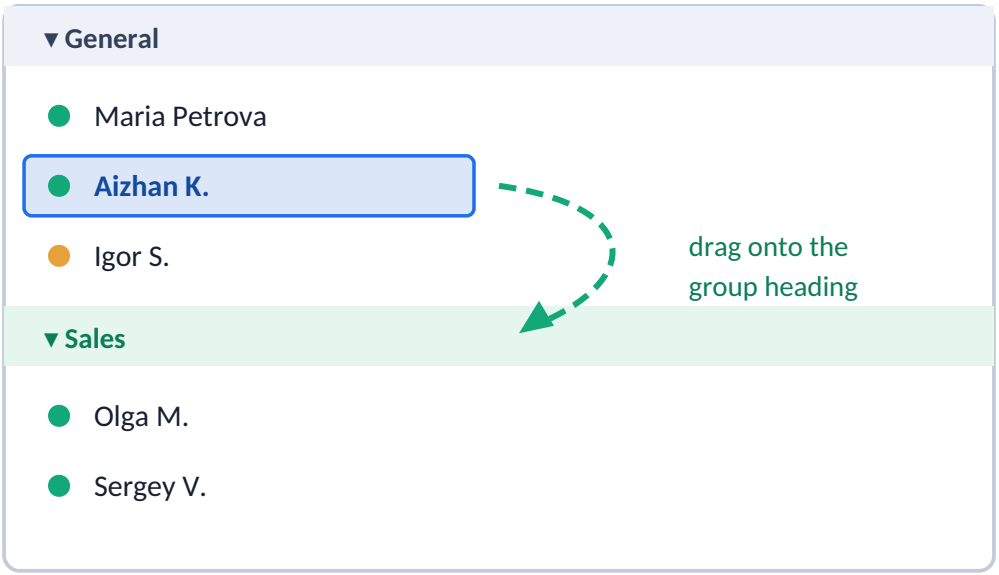
Creating a group

1. Right-click any group heading in the user list.
2. Choose the option to add a new group.
3. Type the name — keep it short and obvious, like **Accounting**.

Moving someone into a group

Two ways, both quick:

1. **Drag and drop.** Click the person's name, hold the mouse button, drag it onto the group heading and release.
2. **Right-click the person**, hover over **Move User to**, and click the destination group.



Dragging a colleague from General into the Sales group.

Why it pays off

Once a group exists, right-clicking its name gives you **Start Group Conversation** and **Send Message to Group** — so notifying an entire department becomes two clicks instead of twenty.

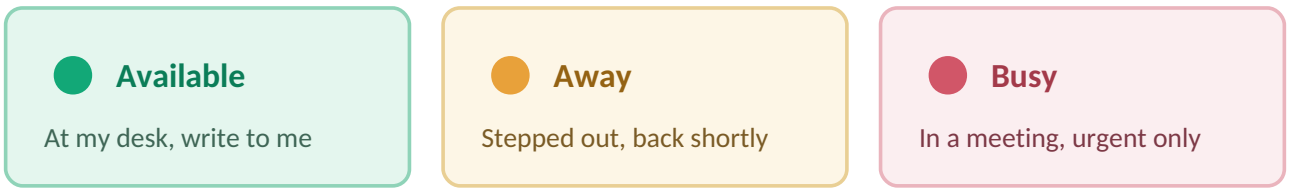
Set it up once for everyone

Groups you create can be exported to a file and imported on other computers. If you are setting up the office, build the group structure once and hand the file to your IT colleague rather than repeating the work on every machine.

10 Your status

A tiny courtesy that prevents a lot of "are you there?" messages.

Your status is the coloured dot everyone sees next to your name. Set it by clicking one of the status buttons near the top of the main window.



Three states, three colours. Your colleagues see the dot next to your name.

The app also switches you to **Away** by itself after a period of inactivity. How long that takes is set in **Settings → General**, and you can turn the behaviour off entirely if you find it annoying.

> **Status is a hint, not a wall**
>
> Messages still arrive when you are marked Busy. The status only tells people what to expect — it does not block anything.

Seeing details about a colleague

Right-click a name and choose **User Information** to see the details they have filled in — department, phone extension, and which computer they are on. It is a fast way to work out whether "Sergey" in your list is the Sergey you actually want.

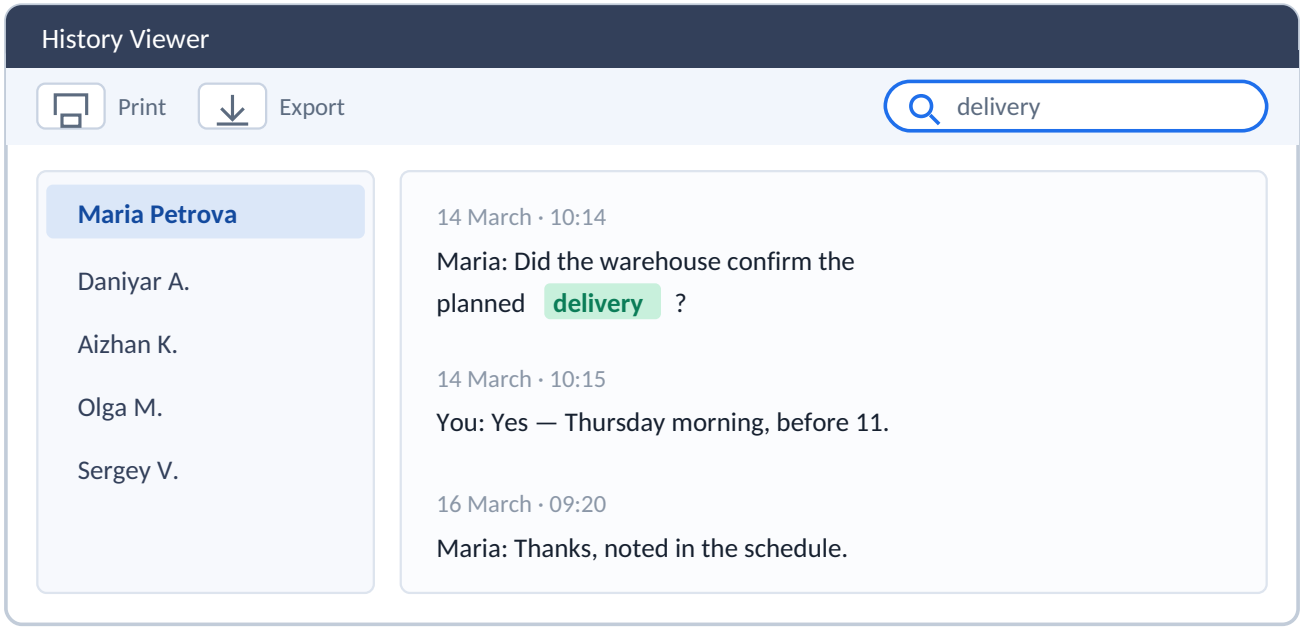
To fill in your own details so others can find you the same way, open **Settings → User Information**.

11 Finding an old message

"We agreed on this in March" — here is how to prove it.

Every conversation is saved on your own computer. The History Viewer lets you read, search, print and export all of it.

1. In the main window's toolbar, click **View Message History**.
2. In the window that opens, pick a colleague from the list on the left. Everything you have exchanged with them appears on the right.
3. To search, type a word into the search box in the top-right corner and press `Enter`. Matches are highlighted in green; press `Enter` again to jump to the next one.



History Viewer with a search in progress — matches are highlighted.

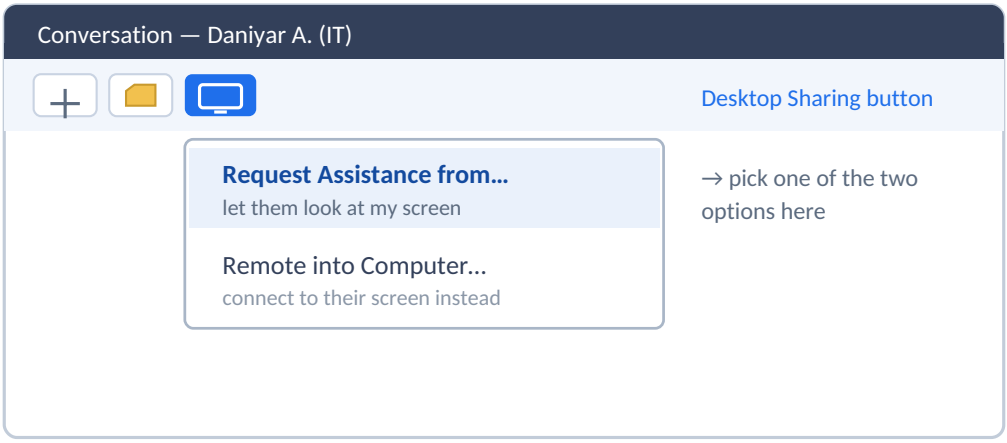
Buttons on the toolbar let you **print** a conversation or **export** it to a file, which is handy when someone asks for a written record.

> **Where is the history kept?**
>
> On your own computer, not on a server. That means it is private to you — and also that it disappears if the computer is wiped. Export anything you would be upset to lose.

12 Asking for remote help

Instead of explaining the problem, just show it.

Desktop sharing lets a colleague see — and, if you allow it, control — your screen. It is built on the remote assistance feature already included in Windows, so it works on Windows computers only.


Conversation — Daniyar A. (IT)
Desktop Sharing button
Request Assistance from...
let them look at my screen
Remote into Computer...
connect to their screen instead
→ pick one of the two options here

The Desktop Sharing button on the conversation toolbar, with its two choices.

Asking someone to look at your screen

1. Start a conversation with the person who is going to help you.
2. On the conversation toolbar, click **Desktop Sharing**.
3. Click **Request Assistance from**. Your request appears in the chat; if you change your mind, click **Cancel**.
4. When they accept, the request changes to **Accepted** and the session begins.
5. While it runs, a small see-through box sits on your screen showing the session is active. Click **End Session** in that box whenever you want it to stop.

Connecting to someone else's screen

1. Click **Desktop Sharing**, then **Remote into Computer**.
2. Enter a user name and password with administrator rights on that computer. This is normally an IT task — if you do not have such an account, you are not the right person for this step.
3. Work as needed, then close the remote window to end the session.

> **You are always in control**
>
> A session cannot start without someone accepting it, and the status box cannot be hidden or closed while it is running — you can always tell when a session is active, and you can end it at any moment.

13 Settings worth knowing about

You can ignore all of these and the app still works. But two or three are genuinely useful.

Open the Settings dialog with the first button on the main window's toolbar. The options are split across tabs:

Tab	What you would change here
General	How long before you are marked Away automatically; whether offline colleagues are hidden from your list; taskbar behaviour.
User Information	The name, department and contact details other people see about you. Worth filling in on day one.
Messaging	Font size, how many past messages are shown when you reopen a chat, and how new messages pop up on your desktop.
Sound Events	Which sounds play for incoming messages, incoming files and colleagues signing in — or silence, if you prefer.
File Transfer	Whether incoming files download automatically, and which folder they are saved to.
Hot Keys	The keyboard shortcuts, including the Enter / Ctrl+Enter behaviour for sending messages.

> **The three most worthwhile changes**
>
> Fill in **User Information** so people can identify you. Point **File Transfer** at a folder you actually use. Turn off the sign-in sound in **Sound Events** if you work in a big office — otherwise your morning is one long series of pings.

If some options are greyed out

In many companies the IT department deliberately locks certain settings so that everyone's configuration stays consistent. If an option will not change, that is usually why — ask IT rather than trying to work around it.

14 If something does not work

The four problems people actually run into, and what to do about each.

My list is empty, or someone is missing

1. Click the **refresh** button on the toolbar and wait a few seconds.
2. Check that the missing person has actually installed and started the app.
3. Check you are both on the office network — not on guest Wi-Fi, and not connected through a VPN that routes you elsewhere.
4. If offline users are hidden in your settings, they simply will not appear. Turn that option off in **Settings → General** to see everyone.
5. Still missing? Your colleague may be on a different part of the network. Ask IT — connecting separate network segments is a configuration they need to make once.

My messages are not arriving

This is almost always a firewall or antivirus program blocking the app. Ask your IT team to allow it. Do not switch your firewall off to test this yourself.

Two people show up with the same identity

This happens when computers were set up by copying one disk image to many machines, so they share an internal identifier. IT can reset it in a couple of minutes; there is nothing you can do from your side.

I cannot send a file

- Check the recipient is online — a green dot. Offline transfers are not possible.
- Check neither computer went to sleep during the transfer.
- Very large folders can take a long time. Watch the progress rather than assuming it has failed.

The window disappeared

It is minimised, not closed. Look for the app's icon next to the clock at the bottom-right of your screen, click it, or right-click it and choose **Restore**.

> **When to call IT**
>
> Anything involving firewalls, network segments, duplicate identities or greyed-out settings is their job, not yours. Tell them what you tried and what you saw — it will get you a fix much faster.

15 Quick reference card

Print this page and keep it near your keyboard for the first week.

I want to...

Goal	Do this
Message one person	Click their name in the list → type → `Enter`
Message several people together	Right-click the group name → Start Group Conversation
Announce something to everyone	Right-click anyone → Send Broadcast Message → tick **Everyone**
Send a file	Drag it onto the conversation window, or onto the person's name
Find files people sent me	Toolbar → Browse Received Files
Find an old message	Toolbar → View Message History → search box, top right
Change how my name appears	Click your name at the top of the main window
Say I am unavailable	Click the **Away** or **Busy** button
Get help with my screen	Open a chat → Desktop Sharing → Request Assistance from
Tidy up a long list of people	Right-click a group → add a group, then drag people into it
Hide the app without quitting	Click ✕ — it keeps running next to the clock

Keyboard shortcuts

Keys	What happens
`Enter`	Send the message
`Ctrl` + `Enter`	Start a new line inside the same message
Start typing a name	Jumps to that person in the list; `Enter` opens the chat

The five things to remember

1. **Green dot means reachable.** Grey means offline — messages will wait, files will not go.
2. **✕ does not quit.** The app keeps running quietly next to the clock.
3. **Drag and drop is the file feature.** There is no attach button to hunt for.

4. **Broadcast interrupts everyone.** Use a group conversation unless it truly concerns the whole office.
5. **Nothing leaves the building.** That is the point of the whole exercise — and why your history lives on your own machine.

> **You are done**
>
> Everything above is optional detail. Click a name, type, press Enter — that alone covers most of what anyone uses a LAN messenger for.